

the Administrator will issue a confirmation document, generally within 15 days after the close of the comment period, advising the public that the direct final rule will either become effective on the date stated in the direct final rule or at least 30 days after the publication date of the confirmation document, whichever is later.

(c) For purposes of this section, an adverse comment is one which explains why the rule would be inappropriate, including a challenge to the rule's underlying premise or approach, or would be ineffective or unacceptable without a change. Comments that are frivolous or insubstantial will not be considered adverse under this procedure. A comment recommending a rule change in addition to the rule will not be considered an adverse comment, unless the commenter states why the rule would be ineffective without the additional change.

(d) Only parties who filed comments to a direct final rule issued under this section may petition under § 190.335 for reconsideration of that direct final rule.

(e) If an adverse comment or notice of intent to file an adverse comment is received, a timely document will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER advising the public and withdrawing the direct final rule in whole or in part. The Administrator may then incorporate the adverse comment into a subsequent direct final rule or may publish a notice of proposed rulemaking. A notice of proposed rulemaking will provide an opportunity for public comment, generally a minimum of 60 days, and will be processed in accordance with §§ 190.311–190.329.

§ 190.341 Special permits.

(a) *What is a special permit?* A special permit is an order by which PHMSA waives compliance with one or more of the Federal pipeline safety regulations under the standards set forth in 49 U.S.C. 60118(c) and subject to conditions set forth in the order. A special permit is issued to a pipeline operator (or prospective operator) for specified facilities that are or, absent waiver, would be subject to the regulation.

(b) *How do I apply for a special permit?* Applications for special permits must

be submitted at least 120 days before the requested effective date using any of the following methods:

(1) Direct fax to PHMSA at: 202-366-4566; or

(2) Mail, express mail, or overnight courier to the Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., East Building, Washington, DC 20590.

(c) *What information must be contained in the application?* Applications must contain the following information:

(1) The name, mailing address, and telephone number of the applicant and whether the applicant is an operator;

(2) A detailed description of the pipeline facilities for which the special permit is sought, including:

(i) The beginning and ending points of the pipeline mileage to be covered and the Counties and States in which it is located;

(ii) Whether the pipeline is interstate or intrastate and a general description of the right-of-way including proximity of the affected segments to populated areas and unusually sensitive areas;

(iii) Relevant pipeline design and construction information including the year of installation, the material, grade, diameter, wall thickness, and coating type; and

(iv) Relevant operating information including operating pressure, leak history, and most recent testing or assessment results;

(3) A list of the specific regulation(s) from which the applicant seeks relief;

(4) An explanation of the unique circumstances that the applicant believes make the applicability of that regulation or standard (or portion thereof) unnecessary or inappropriate for its facility;

(5) A description of any measures or activities the applicant proposes to undertake as an alternative to compliance with the relevant regulation, including an explanation of how such measures will mitigate any safety or environmental risks;

(6) A description of any positive or negative impacts on affected stakeholders and a statement indicating how operating the pipeline pursuant to a special permit would be in the public interest;

(7) A certification that operation of the applicant's pipeline under the requested special permit would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety;

(8) If the application is for a renewal of a previously granted waiver or special permit, a copy of the original grant of the waiver or permit; and

(9) Any other information PHMSA may need to process the application including environmental analysis where necessary.

(d) *How does PHMSA handle special permit applications?* (1) *Public notice.* Upon receipt of an application for a special permit, PHMSA will provide notice to the public of its intent to consider the application and invite comment. In addition, PHMSA may consult with other Federal agencies before granting or denying an application on matters that PHMSA believes may have significance for proceedings under their areas of responsibility.

(2) *Grants and denials.* If the Associate Administrator determines that the application complies with the requirements of this section and that the waiver of the relevant regulation or standard is not inconsistent with pipeline safety, the Associate Administrator may grant the application, in whole or in part, on a temporary or permanent basis. Conditions may be imposed on the grant if the Associate Administrator concludes they are necessary to assure safety, environmental protection, or are otherwise in the public interest. If the Associate Administrator determines that the application does not comply with the requirements of this section or that a waiver is not justified, the application will be denied. Whenever the Associate Administrator grants or denies an application, notice of the decision will be provided to the applicant. PHMSA will post all special permits on its Web site at <http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/>.

(e) *Can a special permit be requested on an emergency basis?* Yes. PHMSA may grant an application for an emergency special permit without notice and comment or hearing if the Associate Administrator determines that such action is in the public interest, is not inconsistent with pipeline safety, and is necessary to address an actual or impending emergency involving pipeline

transportation. For purposes of this section, an emergency event may be local, regional, or national in scope and includes significant fuel supply disruptions and natural or manmade disasters such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, terrorist acts, biological outbreaks, releases of dangerous radiological, chemical, or biological materials, war-related activities, or other similar events. PHMSA will determine on a case-by-case basis what duration is necessary to address the emergency. However, as required by statute, no emergency special permit may be issued for a period of more than 60 days. Each emergency special permit will automatically expire on the date specified in the permit. Emergency special permits may be renewed upon application to PHMSA only after notice and opportunity for a hearing on the renewal.

(f) *How do I apply for an emergency special permit?* Applications for emergency special permits may be submitted to PHMSA using any of the following methods:

(1) Direct fax to the Crisis Management Center at: 202-366-3768;

(2) Direct e-mail to PHMSA at: phmsa.pipeline-emergencyspecpermit@dot.gov; or

(3) Express mail/overnight courier to the Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., East Building, Washington, DC 20590.

(g) *What must be contained in an application for an emergency special permit?* In addition to the information required under paragraph (c) of this section, applications for emergency special permits must include:

(1) An explanation of the actual or impending emergency and how the applicant is affected;

(2) A citation of the regulations that are implicated and the specific reasons the permit is necessary to address the emergency (e.g., lack of accessibility, damaged equipment, insufficient manpower);

(3) A statement indicating how operating the pipeline pursuant to an emergency special permit is in the public interest (e.g., continuity of service, service restoration);

(4) A description of any proposed alternatives to compliance with the regulation (e.g., additional inspections and tests, shortened reassessment intervals); and

(5) A description of any measures to be taken after the emergency situation or permit expires—whichever comes first—to confirm long-term operational reliability of the pipeline facility.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (g): If PHMSA determines that handling of the application on an emergency basis is not warranted, PHMSA will notify the applicant and process the application under normal special permit procedures of this section.

(h) *In what circumstances will PHMSA revoke, suspend, or modify a special permit?* (1) PHMSA may revoke, suspend, or modify a special permit on a finding that:

(i) Intervening changes in Federal law mandate revocation, suspension, or modification of the special permit;

(ii) Based on a material change in conditions or circumstances, continued adherence to the terms of the special permit would be inconsistent with safety;

(iii) The application contained inaccurate or incomplete information, and the special permit would not have been granted had the application been accurate and complete;

(iv) The application contained deliberately inaccurate or incomplete information; or

(v) The holder has failed to comply with any material term or condition of the special permit.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (h)(3) of this section, before a special permit is modified, suspended or revoked, PHMSA will notify the holder in writing of the proposed action and the reasons for it, and provide an opportunity to show cause why the proposed action should not be taken.

(i) The holder may file a written response that shows cause why the proposed action should not be taken within 30 days of receipt of notice of the proposed action.

(ii) After considering the holder's written response, or after 30 days have passed without response since receipt of the notice, PHMSA will notify the holder in writing of the final decision with a brief statement of reasons.

(3) If necessary to avoid a risk of significant harm to persons, property, or the environment, PHMSA may in the notification declare the proposed action immediately effective.

(4) Unless otherwise specified, the terms and conditions of a corrective action order, compliance order, or other order applicable to a pipeline facility covered by a special permit will take precedence over the terms of the special permit.

(5) A special permit holder may seek reconsideration of a decision under paragraph (h) of this section as provided in paragraph (i) of this section.

(i) *Can a denial of a request for a special permit or a revocation of an existing special permit be appealed?* Reconsideration of the denial of an application for a special permit or a revocation of an existing special permit may be sought by petition to the Associate Administrator. Petitions for reconsideration must be received by PHMSA within 20 calendar days of the notice of the grant or denial and must contain a brief statement of the issue and an explanation of why the petitioner believes that the decision being appealed is not in the public interest. The Associate Administrator may grant or deny, in whole or in part, any petition for reconsideration without further proceedings. The Associate Administrator's decision is the final administrative action.

(j) *Are documents related to an application for a special permit available for public inspection?* Documents related to an application, including the application itself, are available for public inspection on regulations.gov or the Docket Operations Facility to the extent such documents do not include information exempt from public disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b). Applicants may request confidential treatment under part 7 of this title.

(k) *Am I subject to enforcement action for non-compliance with the terms and conditions of a special permit?* Yes. PHMSA inspects for compliance with the terms and conditions of special permits and if a probable violation is identified, PHMSA will initiate one or

more of the enforcement actions under subpart B of this part.

[73 FR 16568, Mar. 28, 2008, as amended at 74 FR 2893, Jan. 16, 2009; Amdt. 190–16, 78 FR 58914, Sept. 25, 2013]

PART 191—TRANSPORTATION OF NATURAL AND OTHER GAS BY PIPELINE; ANNUAL REPORTS, INCIDENT REPORTS, AND SAFETY-RELATED CONDITION REPORTS

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AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 5121, 60102, 60103, 60104, 60108, 60117, 60118, and 60124; and 49 CFR 1.53.

§ 191.1 Scope.

(a) This part prescribes requirements for the reporting of incidents, safety-related conditions, and annual pipeline summary data by operators of gas pipeline facilities located in the United States or Puerto Rico, including pipelines within the limits of the Outer Continental Shelf as that term is defined in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331).

(b) This part does not apply to—

(1) Offshore gathering of gas in State waters upstream from the outlet flange of each facility where hydrocarbons are produced or where produced hydrocarbons are first separated, dehy-

drated, or otherwise processed, whichever facility is farther downstream;

(2) Pipelines on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) that are producer-operated and cross into State waters without first connecting to a transporting operator's facility on the OCS, upstream (generally seaward) of the last valve on the last production facility on the OCS. Safety equipment protecting PHMSA-regulated pipeline segments is not excluded. Producing operators for those pipeline segments upstream of the last valve of the last production facility on the OCS may petition the Administrator, or designee, for approval to operate under PHMSA regulations governing pipeline design, construction, operation, and maintenance under 49 CFR 190.9.

(3) Pipelines on the Outer Continental Shelf upstream of the point at which operating responsibility transfers from a producing operator to a transporting operator; or

(4) Onshore gathering of gas—

(i) Through a pipeline that operates at less than 0 psig (0 kPa);

(ii) Through a pipeline that is not a regulated onshore gathering line (as determined in § 192.8 of this subchapter); and

(iii) Within inlets of the Gulf of Mexico, except for the requirements in § 192.612.

[Amdt. 191–5, 49 FR 18960, May 3, 1984, as amended by Amdt. 191–6, 53 FR 24949, July 1, 1988; Amdt. 191–11, 61 FR 27793, June 3, 1996; Amdt. 191–12, 62 FR 61695, Nov. 19, 1997; Amdt. 191–15, 68 FR 46111, Aug. 5, 2003; 70 FR 11139, Mar. 8, 2005; 75 FR 72904, Nov. 26, 2010]

§ 191.3 Definitions.

As used in this part and the PHMSA Forms referenced in this part—

Administrator means the Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration or his or her delegate

Gas means natural gas, flammable gas, or gas which is toxic or corrosive;

Incident means any of the following events:

(1) An event that involves a release of gas from a pipeline, or of liquefied natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, refrigerant gas, or gas from an LNG facility, and that results in one or more of the following consequences: